

## Introduction

The Power County Wildland Fire Mitigation Plan was initiated by the Power County Commissioners, Power County, Idaho in June 2003. The Commissioners required that the plan:

- Coordinate with the Idaho State Strategic Plan for the implementation of the National Fire Plan, and
- Utilize the format developed for all hazard mitigation plans provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The Power County plan is based on information, research, and data from numerous county, state, federal and private sources. Power County contracted Dynamac Corporation as the coordinator of the Power County Wildland Fire Mitigation Group and plan developer.

The Power County Wildland Fire Mitigation Group conducted periodic meetings from June to December 2003. Development of the Power County Wildfire Mitigation Plan was achieved through input to and from the Power County Wildland Fire Mitigation Group (see Appendix C). *The Power County Press*, published progress reports and informative articles after some planning team meetings, including phone numbers and e-mail addresses for public input, or participation. Information and draft plan sections were posted on the Power County web site (<http://www.co.power.id.us/fire-mitigation/default.htm>) for easy access by the general public.

Research data and wildfire hazard models provided by Idaho State University have also been used in the plan formulation. The information and data gathered by Dynamac Corporation included three public meetings in different areas of Power County. A wildfire hazard questionnaire was used to collect information from residents and was made available to residents during public meetings and at the County Court House and Power County Public Library. The questionnaire was also available for download and printing from the Power County web site. An example of the questionnaire is located in Appendix C. Numerous stakeholder interviews were conducted as part of the public meetings. A list of Power County stakeholders attending public meetings is also in Appendix C. Evaluation of wildfire hazards on Federal and State lands utilized WUI at risk in Power County relating to their fuels type, condition and density, combined with slope, aspect and fire suppression response time. This rating system identified high-risk areas and was developed by the Idaho State University and Bureau of Land Management fuels specialists.

Priorities for the Power County Wildland Fire Mitigation plan are:

1. Protection of Life: Identify and provide mitigation recommendations for areas of high wildfire risks that are in or adjacent to homes and communities, and improve critical county infrastructure facilities.
2. Protection of Property: Identify and provide mitigation recommendations for properties of moderate and high wildfire risk. Increase public awareness through

- education, training and information sharing addressing wildfire risks and mitigation measures.
3. Protection of Resources: Identify resources that are at risk to wildfires and implement natural resource planning to protect these resources. To include protection and mitigation of at risk watersheds, vegetation, fish, wildlife and maintain soil stability.
  4. Values: Scenic, historical, cultural.

Implicit in these priorities are the need to:

Improve Wildfire Emergency Services: Improve county infrastructure and wildfire emergency service planning, training, communications, and equipment.

Increase Public Awareness of Wildfire Prevention: Increase public awareness of firewise practices and wildfire prevention through education training and information sharing.

Improve Partnerships for Implementation: Utilize partnerships currently established and develop additional participation with State, Federal, and private organizations.

## **Power County Profile**

Power County encompasses a diverse landscape within its 1,450 square miles. The southern portion of the county includes the classic Great Basin landscape of the Arbon and Rockland Valleys. The Arbon Valley lies between the Bannock Range (and the Bannock County border), to the east and the Deep Creek Mountains. At 8,670 feet above mean sea level, Deep Creek Peak is the county's highest point. West of the Deep Creeks are the Rockland Valley and the Sublett Range, through which runs the Power-Cassia County line. North of the Arbon and Rockland Valleys rolling hills descend to the relatively level farmlands of the Snake River Plain, the Snake River, and American Falls Reservoir. This 61,000-acre reservoir is part of the Minidoka Irrigation Project and an important recreational resource for southeastern Idaho. The Union Pacific Railroad and I-86 follow the Snake River and the route of the old Oregon Trail through the county, providing excellent accessibility for a rural area. North of the Snake River Plain, Power - County stretches into the lava fields of the Great Rift Desert.